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Today's News

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National Archives Electronic System Aims to Unify Electronic Documents

Electronic information poses a new challenge for archivists, if only because of the sheer magnitude of data involved, said officials with the National Archives and Records Administration at a press conference Wednesday discussing the progress of the Electronic Records Archive (ERA). Whereas the agency received two terabytes of information from the Clinton administration, according to an inspector general report, it received 77 terabytes from the Bush administration, the Archives said. And as much information as it received this time, it will have to handle even more when President Barack Obama leaves office, said Sam McClure, ERA lifecycle officer for presidential libraries.

The electronic archive is divided into two parts -- one to handle federal agency records and one to handle presidential records, which are inaccessible except to a select few for the first five years after an administration. The progress on the archive has come under criticism, both from the GAO and the agency's inspector general. The inspector general's last semi-annual report, covering the period ending March 31, said "program officials are unable to clearly define when, how, or if the ERA will be fully operational," and hadn't given a clear definition of what the "full operating capability" would entail.

Wednesday, program officials said full operating capability means researchers will have a "unified research experience." Right now the archive has two primary online databases, and there's only a "clumsy cross-

At Our Deadline

The Google Book Search settlement will likely get its first congressional review Thursday of next week. The House Judiciary Committee said late Wednesday it had scheduled a hearing titled "Competition and Commerce in Digital Books," suggesting discussion may go beyond the settlement itself and address the larger market for electronic books. No witnesses have been named. A spokesman for the committee declined to say whether the Google settlement was even the primary focus of the hearing. -- *GP*

walk between them," said David Kepley, ERA transition officer for federal records. The new system will also make it easier to find images that have been digitized by the agency's partners, Kepley said. Those images are available now, but it's not obvious from the Web site, he said. Internally, the system solves the problem of how to preserve documents and provide access, independent of any particular hardware or software system, said Martha Morphy, assistant archivist in the Office of Information Services. It will also provide a workflow to work with federal agencies submitting records, she said. The agency half of the electronic archives should have full capability in 2012, she said. Although the archive is now testing the system with four agencies, and plans to add another 25 by the end of the year, agencies won't be required to use the electronic system until 2011.

The agency began working with the White House in the summer and fall of 2008 to begin preparing to receive electronic documents, McClure said. The electronic archive should have "ingested" all Bush documents by October. In addition to extracting documents and images from proprietary systems, the archive must move the metadata to XML, he said. There must also be capability for simple searches of content, including attachments within e-mails, he said. Because unmarked classified documents could end up mixed with unclassified documents, archivists have to be able to isolate documents in question until their status is resolved, he said. Each former president has authority to declare executive privilege over his documents for a limited amount of time, and the current president can claim executive privilege over any of the former presidents' documents, McClure said. Each former president might also have differing sensitivities about different types of documents. Therefore, in the physical world archivists are assigned to a particular presidential library and work only with those papers. The electronic archive is attempting to replicate this system by ensuring that archivists for former President George H. W. Bush, for example, have access to his documents only and not to those of former presidents George W. Bush or Bill Clinton.

The archive contracted with Lockheed Martin in 2005, following a two-company design competition, to create the system. According to an inspector general's report, it was a \$317.4 million cost-plus award fee contract. This fiscal year, the agency is spending \$60 million, Morphy said. The archive is now making plans for an open competition for a maintenance contract after Lockheed Martin's development contract ends in 2011. -- *Leslie Cantu*

Teaching to Tests

FCC Faces Tough Challenge Getting Broadband Benchmarks Right, Experts Agree

Establishing the right benchmarks to assess U.S. progress in deploying broadband must be viewed as a critical part of the FCC's National Broadband Plan, said Public Knowledge Legal Director Harold Feld during a commission broadband workshop on benchmarks Wednesday afternoon. Other panelists warned that benchmarks themselves, especially those that rely on comparisons to the rest of world, could provide little meaningful data.

Donald Stockdale, chief economist of the FCC Wireline Bureau, said the agency will look closely at various measures of deployment and adoption, speed and quality of service and of competition as it draws up the plan. "These benchmarks can be used to chart our progress over time, as well as to identify areas where additional effort is required," he said.

Benchmarks are critical "so that we can know we're on track, we know we're moving in the right direction, that we're not going to wake up in five years and be surprised that we haven't achieved our goals or that our goals are wildly off course or that our methods are wildly off course," Feld said.

The benchmarks have to be informed by the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, but the Act's goals are "amazingly broad and complicated," Feld said. "It's universal, affordable broadband, used to its

maximum utility, whatever that means, that has impact in advancing consumer welfare, civic participation, public safety, essentially every sector of our lives." He said the temptation could be to "draw back and to go to what we know," relying on narrow market metrics. "That may technically comply with a narrow reading of the statute, but it will fail," he said. "We will end up where we are after the last broadband plan" in 2004.

"Benchmarks are good. Benchmarks are useful if they're done in an appropriate way," said Gregory Rosston, deputy director of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. "People say broadband is good. More broadband is better. That's great. But we also need to know how much does it cost."

Rosston said one hot-button issue is how the U.S. compares to the rest of the world, particularly comparisons based on the rankings by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). "Adoption is something you can measure and it has been focused on because it's easily measured, it's easily understood, but does it tell us anything?" he asked. The FCC should focus instead on the benefits that would come from wider adoption, versus the costs. "If we find that the benefits of broadband do outweigh the costs, how do we then determine a reasonable and efficient way to pay for it?" Rosston asked. World rankings "are not an end in themselves," he said. "Benchmarks should be used to understand what factors in the market are not working and how policy can be more effective."

Benchmarks by themselves shouldn't be an end, agreed Richard Clarke, assistant vice president of public policy at AT&T. "For broadband benchmarking to be useful, it's essential that these benchmarks reflect accurately the clear policy goals of the commission," he said. "You can expect providers to teach to the commission's tests. If you set out a wrong benchmark you may get wrong performance as a result."

Clarke also warned against relying too much on international rankings like those from the OECD. "Attempting to align U.S. benchmarks with benchmarks adopted in foreign environments should be approached with great caution," he said. "The OECD's benchmark for measuring fixed broadband penetration is lines per capita. But fixed broadband lines typically serve an entire household and [U.S.] households are generally larger than those in other OECD countries." Even in the U.S., household sizes vary significantly by state, he noted.

Catherine Sandoval, assistant professor of law at Santa Clara University, said speed of connections by itself is not a good measure for assessing broadband or whether wireless connections should be viewed the same as wire-line. Sandoval said she often asks audiences whether anyone would be willing to give up their personal computer and rely on a cellphone for Internet access. "The reason no one raises their hand is not just because of issues about the size of the screen and the size of the keyboard and worry about carpal thumb, but also the nature of the level of the Internet access which is provided," she said. In assessing access, the FCC also needs to focus on limitations providers impose, such as restriction on downloading applications, application use, computer tethering and congestion policies and practices, she said.

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Scott Berendt, director of research, evaluation and documentation at One Economy, urged creation of a broadband progress board, to be chaired by the FCC, which would include members from other parts of the government, private sector companies and public interest groups. "The intention of the broadband progress board would be to implement and monitor the national broadband plan and focus on the established benchmarks and performance measures that have been handed down," he said. -- *Howard Buskirk*

Leave Social Media Alone

Interoperability Is Target of Identity Management Shift, Officials Say

Federal agencies would like to get out of the credentialing business for everyone but their own employees as much as possible, officials told attendees at a cybersecurity event hosted by the Digital Government Institute on Wednesday. The plan is to set standards that others must meet to have their identification systems for physical and network access recognized by the agencies. How cloud computing fits into identity management isn't yet clear, they said. But Mary Dixon, director of the Defense Department's Manpower Data Center, said she was trying to convince officials that social networking isn't antithetical to security.

About two-thirds of 3 million federal workers have switched to the HSPD-12 standard for smart cards, and through deployment of public-key infrastructure technology, the department has reduced "successful" intrusions of its network by 50 percent, Dixon said. The goal is to get any authorized person, within the government or contractor, "provisioned" immediately on the Defense Department network when they log in, rather than the two to three weeks it now takes to get set up. "They resort to their own personal e-mail" to get work done in the interim, she said. Stephen Duncan, director of the Center for Identity Management and Information Assurance at the General Services Administration (GSA), said the agency has finished vetting staff at 70 agencies to use the cards but not all have been used.

Just as important as access is "attribution" -- tracking what people do when they sign on, said Tim LeMaster, director of engineering services at Juniper Networks. With single sign-on functionality and "federating that identity" across networks, if the wrong person gets on or gets too much access, "the threat is just as severe" whether they log in remotely or bring a laptop to the building, he said.

The move to open standards for authentication is good, because the government would rather be in the position of providing guidance, not managing them on its own, Duncan said. LeMaster pointed to standards under development in Microsoft's Trustworthy Computing Group and other standards bodies. The Defense Department has been inviting other "agencies, federations and industries" to come in and test their authentication systems for interoperability with its network, and so far it's "pretty much been successful," Dixon said. Asked about the use of cloud computing in authentication, LeMaster said it wasn't terribly different from conventional network access. But "we need to move at a pace" for adopting cloud services "with security in mind." Duncan said ID management will play a "huge role" in the cloud, and noted concerns in agencies about authorizing users for applications and systems that agencies don't host or know how to physically reach. It's a "little of a culture change for all of us."

Dixon alluded to the Defense Department's wavering apprehensions about the use of social media. Security officials "always say 'this is a risk, let's turn it off,'" for Web sites such as YouTube and MySpace, Dixon said. But the point of security is to manage risk, "not to bury our head in the sand" and block social networking functions completely. It's important that those in charge of security define what's risky in social networking and work to mitigate it, Dixon said. The most recent social-media clampdown came a month ago, when the Marine Corps blocked social networks from its portion of the NIPRNET network, citing security risks. That led Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to post on Twitter: "Obviously we need to find right balance between security and transparency. We are working on that. But am I still going to tweet? You bet."

GSA is looking at ways to communicate to the public with interoperable authentication, Duncan said. One workgroup focused on citizen outreach is looking at the OpenID standard, which is used by Google, Yahoo, Facebook and MySpace among others. “We absolutely want to federate the identities that are already out there,” he said. GSA also is running a pilot program with some agencies on provisioning data between them. Dixon said the Defense Department is reviewing the PIV-I standard for use in authenticating contractors, who now must be issued an HSPD-12 card. “We have a long way to go” just within DoD on simplifying authentication, she said, noting that next year separate credentials will be given out for workers in the National Capital Region.

Dixon’s goal for 2010 is to enable “cryptographic logon” for agency networks, get rid of user names and passwords, and put in place access control systems that do more than review a badge, she said. Regarding the president’s call for an ID management strategy under his cybersecurity plan, Dixon said each agency needs a “senior, strong champion for getting this done” and putting pressure on their colleagues. It won’t be easy, Dixon said: Some officials were “brought to the table kicking and screaming” over earlier requirements to have their departments be able to digitally sign documents. -- *Greg Piper*

Digital Government Institute Notebook ...

The Defense Department is in “the midst of [developing] a netcentric capability that ultimately we see as creating a huge force multiplier,” Mitchell Komaroff, director of the Globalization Task Force for the assistant secretary of defense for networks and information integration and the CIO’s office, told attendees. It’s focused on integrating data and networks onto the department’s Global Information Grid, because “any two devices ... are dying to talk to each other,” he said. The problem is “the relative talent required of threat actors ... is steadily declining,” because such attackers work in a “real-time, open-source environment” while the federal government faces legal and constitutional restraints in defending against attacks, Komaroff said: The number of tools available to attack Defense Department systems is “growing at an alarming rate.” Komaroff said 2008 was the “tipping point” for cyberattacks as a separate domain in battle, with denial-of-service attacks in Estonia and cyberelements in the Georgia-Russia war. One of the first issues that President Barack Obama’s pick for White House cybersecurity coordinator will have to confront is the likelihood that U.S. computers -- perhaps in the federal government -- were “embroiled in the botnets” that attacked Estonian networks, he said. Komaroff said the department is aiming for “predictability of how our systems and networks will respond and degrade under the full stress of a capable adversary attacking it,” and seeking from suppliers products whose security is “commensurate with the criticality” of their function to the Defense Department. “When the systems fail, as they will ... the mission must be completed,” with operators and products able to “dynamically allocate cyberresources” in the midst of attack, he said. The “ad hoc manual approach” to cyberdefense is moving “to a world characterized by resilience, by dynamic defense, by policy-based dynamic management of risk.” But the Department of Homeland Security will certainly retain its role as the first line of defense for the “domestic elements of the infrastructure” in civilian networks, he said. Despite global worry about “innately undeterrable actors,” Komaroff said he was confident that cyberspace would be ruled by conventional notions of deterrence as cybernorms are developed by the international community: “Cyberspace isn’t operating in a vacuum.” -- *GP*

Agencies

It’s not bad to be worried about the FCC’s national broadband plan, because the emotion will likely result in more creative thinking as the commission develops its recommendations, plan coordinator Blair Levin said Wednesday at a breakfast hosted by the Udwin Breakfast Group. “To a certain extent, I want you to be worried. I want everyone in this room to be worried. I’m worried.” The country’s broadband problems aren’t easy to solve, he said. “What should worry you is if we have a knee-jerk reaction.” Levin said he and Chairman Julius Gena-

chowski didn't have the broadband plan all worked out before holding workshops and collecting comment, as some have implied. Levin said he hopes the final plan will provide a strong "foundation" to build on. "If we do our job right, we shouldn't have to do it [again] for another 10 years," he said. The FCC broadband team's "aspiration" is to present "thorough, rigorous analysis of the state of broadband" at the FCC's September meeting, Levin said. However, the team doesn't plan to discuss "solutions" yet, he said. The national plan won't be "self-executing," Levin said. "For any part of it to actually become operative, some other entity in government will have to act." Levin expects the plan to include recommendations for many government bodies, including Congress, states and cities, he said. "Our job is to give good options to the people who make the decisions." The national plan should launch a "dynamic process," because setting a single-number goal is likely to be wrong, he said. "One size doesn't fit all," and serious analysis is needed to determine the best answers for different places and demographic groups, he said. Udwin Breakfast Group events are usually off the record, but Levin requested that Wednesday's breakfast be open to media. The event was attended by senior executives from major U.S. telecom and other communications technology companies. -- **AB**

The FCC mustn't "limit itself to one narrow and arbitrary definition of broadband," the Telecommunications Industry Association said in comments this week on how to define the high-speed Internet technology (WID Sept p5). The telecom manufacturer association urged a "tiered speed analysis" so the commission can "take into account current and future technologies" and "diverse uses and benefits" of broadband. The FCC should "craft tiers in a manner that allows for the use of all technologies to achieve various policy objectives," it said. "Different broadband networks offer different capabilities, and the expectations of users will vary depending on the context." And the broadband definition should be updated periodically, the association said. The FCC's annual Section 706 inquiries on the state of broadband deployment "represent a logical forum for revisiting, if necessary, wireless and wireline broadband speeds," it said.

Courts

Amazon took its objection to Google's digitized book strategy one step further with a court filing Tuesday in U.S. District Court in New York. In the filing, the e-tailer claimed the plan would violate antitrust law and the court should reject the recent settlement between Google and publishers. Amazon already opposed the settlement as a member of the newly-formed Open Book Alliance (WID Aug 27 p3). The system proposed as part of the settlement would lead to price fixing, Amazon claimed. The proposed settlement "short-circuits proposed legislation" and "attempts to legislate a private solution to a problem that can only truly be solved with across-the-board changes to the copyright law that affect everyone," Amazon said, alluding to orphan-works legislation. The proposed settlement urges the court "to exercise powers that it does not have," Amazon said.

International

The U.S. and Mexico signed a bilateral telecommunications agreement for a cross-border public safety communications network to strengthen border security, the U.S. State and Homeland Security departments said on Wednesday. The agreement creates a bilateral working group through which the countries will coordinate installation and operation of the network, which will support cross-border voice, data and video channels. It also provides radio interference protection and a process by which the working group can establish interoperable communications for qualifying public safety and law enforcement organizations. The working group will include representatives from the FCC, NTIA, DHS and State Department for the U.S., and the Secretariat of Public Security and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation for Mexico.

Industry Notes

Activision Blizzard and RealNetworks are "charter members" of the Distributed Computing Industry Association's (DCIA) new P2P-for-Games Working Group. The association gave us an exclusive preview of the group's composition and mission Wednesday. The DCIA previously has set up working groups for bandwidth efficiency in file-sharing, monetizing copyrighted content flowing across peer-to-peer networks, and preventing accidental sharing. Other charter members of the new group include massively multiplayer online game company Turbine, casual games company PlayFirst, game distributor Yummy Interactive, and content delivery networks Abacast, Solid State Networks and Velocix. It's being co-chaired by Solid State CEO Rick Buonincontri and Rich Roberts, PlayFirst vice president of sales and business development. The group will work to "develop best practices that will optimize commercial distribution of digital games and updates" to PCs, consoles and mobile devices through P2P technology, said DCIA CEO Marty Lafferty. It will sell consumers on the value and trustworthiness of using P2P technology for games, and intellectual property owners on the protection of their rights in P2P distribution, Buonincontri and Roberts said. Software developers, distributors, publishers and marketers can participate in the group, as can current DCIA members. Lafferty told us the working group will decide whether to add an "observer category" for vendors, Internet service providers and "support entities" at its first teleconference Sept. 24, and if it does, will approach such companies for participation. The group will next meet Oct. 22 in person at the DCIA's first P2P and Games Conference, he said. The working group also wants public and "IP interest groups" with a focus on games to participate. Lafferty said the Entertainment Software Association, the U.S. game industry's top lobbyist, wasn't an automatic target: The working group aims to "recruit their top choice" after meeting. "Appropriate" regulatory authorities already have been invited to join as well. Those interested in participating in the working group can e-mail PFGWG@dcia.info, and in speaking at the conference, PGC@dcia.info. -- GP


Forty-one million Americans played casual PC games during the first six months of 2009, Nielsen said Wednesday. Of the top 20 casual game titles that Nielsen tracked in May, card games, played by 88 percent of casual gamers, were by far the most popular, it said. Puzzle games were a distant second, at 9.5 percent. Casual games are proving to be "very popular, especially in this economic environment, and they enjoy a broader audience than typical, hardcore PC games," said Brad Raczka, marketing analyst for Nielsen's Games division. Casual games tend to be much less expensive to play than non-casual titles and many of them are free online. "Not only does casual gaming draw in traditional 'gamers' such as teens and young adults, but also prime advertising targets such as stay-at-home moms, retired people and younger kids," he said. But Nielsen said casual gamers spent less than 50 percent of the time that non-casual gamers did in each game session. Casual game sessions lasted an average of 31 minutes, versus 80 minutes per session for non-casual games, it said. Activision Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* gave non-casual game use a significant lift, with an average play time of nearly 120 minutes, Nielsen said. Measured over a seven-month period, the recurring game play rate for casual games matched or surpassed that of non-casual games, it also said. For example, about 20 percent of the 47 million unique gamers who played *Microsoft Solitaire* at least once during the seven-month period came back to the game at least once in each of the seven months measured, but only about 12 percent of the 5 million *World of Warcraft* players who played the game in two or more months returned to it at least once every month, Nielsen said. Females still make up the majority of casual gamers, at 58 percent, it said. Males still tend to be the heaviest players of non-casual games, making up 75 percent of those playing non-casual shooter games and 63 percent of those playing role-playing games, it said. Players of non-casual games also tend to have computers with much more memory, averaging more than 2 GB, versus only 0.5-1 GB for casual gamers, Nielsen said. The data was based on a sample of more than 185,000 U.S.-tracked PCs processed by Nielsen's GamePlay Metrics syndicated service, it said.

The number of people who watched live TV in the home in Q2 increased less than 1 percent from a year earlier and fell slightly from Q1 to 284.4 million people, Nielsen said in its *Three Screens Reports* which it publishes periodically. The number of online TV watchers grew 19.4 percent. The number of people who watched TV on a mobile phone gained 70 percent from a year ago to 15.2 million. Still, the growth in live TV viewing at home was an all-time high for that time of year, Nielsen said. "Although we have seen the computer and mobile phone screens taking on a significant role, their emergence has not been at the cost of TV viewership," said Jim O'Hara, president of media product leadership for Nielsen. Media multi-tasking is playing a big role, Nielsen said. About a quarter of at home Internet

usage occurs in front of the TV, it said. The bulk of what people watch online is short-form videos from sites such as YouTube, Nielsen said. Major network TV content makes up most of the mobile video viewing, it said.

AT&T will open a testing and certification lab for embedded wireless and machine-to-machine (M2M) devices running on the company's network, the carrier said. AT&T's lab, located in Austin, Texas, will test the network compatibility, data performance and audio quality of devices, including netbooks, e-readers, portable navigation devices, utility products and health care-related tracking devices, among others. It also will manage field tests, and offer consumer electronics vendors and M2M device makers a clear certification path for the company's network. The move came a day after Sprint Nextel signed a multi-year deal with M2M provider DataSmart.

China and South Korea are continuing to see annual growth in online games, Take-Two Interactive Chairman Strauss Zelnick said on an earnings call Tuesday, noting analysts predicted that market could top \$5 billion by 2012. "We hope to benefit from the growth of this market through our partnership with Tencent to bring NBA 2K online to Asia," Zelnick said. Take-Two continues to experiment with the iPhone and iPod touch after releasing its first title for the Apple platforms, *Sid Meier's Civilization Revolution*, Aug. 10. That title "quickly became a number-one selling game on Apple's App Store," and it has "remained among the top-25 selling titles across all applications in most territories," said CEO Ben Feder. The company is "very pleased with its initial performance, which illustrates the power of our internally-owned intellectual property to drive sales on any platform," he said. Feder didn't say how many downloads of the title had been made. The company plans to launch *Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars* and *Beaterator* for the iPhone and iPod touch this fall. Take-Two is "going to continue to look" at the Apple platforms "as an opportunity," said Zelnick. But he said "it is early days," and "it isn't clear what the consumer uptick will be" yet. Take-Two is also not concerned about any possible "cannibalization" of Nintendo DS and Sony PSP sales from the growing popularity of the Apple platforms, he said. Gamers use the Apple devices "in different ways than they use their PSP and their DS, and people use their PCs in different ways than they use their consoles," he said. The games that Take-Two is making for the Apple platforms are also different than the ones that it makes for the dedicated game consoles, he said, noting the company is not just porting titles over to the Apple devices. The Apple devices now lend themselves to "more bite-sized" game experiences "than the PSP or the DS," he said. Even if cannibalization was an issue, however, he said "we'd rather have a larger market share for our intellectual property across all possible platforms" than just focus on only a couple of platforms. -- **JB**

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